

EIGHT ASH GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held at Aldham Village Hall, New Road, Aldham, Colchester CO6 3QT on Wednesday 11 February 2026 at 7. 30pm.

Present: Cllr Lorraine Christie
Cllr John Jardine (Chairman)
Cllr Michael Eldridge
Cllr Flavia Maria Manda
Cllr Dean Nokes
Cllr Stephen Smith
Cllr Andrew Triolo
Cllr Christine Willetts

There were five members of the public in attendance.

Colchester City Councillor Dennis Willetts also attended the meeting.

Colchester City Councillors Lewis Barber and Sara Naylor sent their apologies.

129-25/26 To receive Apologies for Absence and confirm acceptance of those apologies

There were no apologies to receive.

130-25/26 To co-opt to the Parish Council to fill one of the current vacancies

It was **agreed** to co-opt Michael Eldridge to the Parish Council to fill one of the current vacancies. Cllr Eldridge signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

131-25/26 Declaration of Interests

Cllr Nokes declared an interest in Item 141-25/26(b) as a trustee of the Village Hall Committee.

132-25/26 Public Participation

Mr Chambers said there was not much to report at the moment with regard to the Cricket Club. He said the willows that were planned to help with drainage had been planted, although it would take some time for them to mature.

133-25/26 To agree as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 14 January 2026

The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 14 January 2026 were **agreed** as a true record.

134-25/26 To note progress on matters mentioned in the minutes

There was no progress to report that would not be dealt with under other Items on this agenda.

Signed _____
Cllr J. Jardine, Chairman

135-25/26 Report from the County and Borough Councillors: Report from County Councillor and Ward Councillors, if present.

Cllr Dennis Willetts said that Cllr Lewis Barber, as a member of the Committee, and Cllr Sara Naylor, as an attendee, were at the CCC Local Plan Committee meeting that evening. He said the statement from the seven Parish Councils submitted as a response to the recent consultation would be represented at the meeting. He said once all the responses to the consultation were catalogued, a Regulation 90 consultation on major issues would take place. He said this consultation could only consider legal issues or fundamental planning points.

He said the Government had agreed that City and County Council elections should take place in May 2026 in Colchester. He said it was still possible that they could be cancelled. He confirmed that he would be in office until 2028.

He said the newsletter was approaching its deadline and there was a good amount of adverts. He said however that there was a shortage of interesting newsworthy articles. He said it would be a better disposition of labour if each Parish Councillor wrote a short piece, about a local issue in which they were particularly interested.

Cllr Jardine said that the statement mentioned above could be included. Cllr Triolo said that contribution of the resident with specific planning experience to this statement should be noted and appreciated.

136-25/26 Action Tracker

a) To review the Action Tracker

Cllrs noted some difficulty with accessing the document. It was noted that this would be reviewed.

b) Update on transfer of Iron Latch Wood

Cllr Triolo said he had met with representatives from the Woodland Trust and Colchester City Council at the site the previous week. He said the Woodland Trust were keen to engage with the Parish Council and work with them on the site. He said they had suggested a tree survey and offered help and advice on coppicing and other maintenance needs. He said they had a very strong body of volunteers with some really good work having been done. He said the Woodland Trust had also expressed concern about the access to the wood, which had been flagged as an issue during the current transfer process. He said there was a possibility of volunteer involvement from the Trust in the Eight Ash Green part of the wood, subject to all GDPR concerns being resolved.

He said both CCC and the Trust were on board with the need to move forward quickly on the transfer of ownership, with regard to nesting season and the deadline for spending the S106 monies.

c) Website and emails

Some issues with the email transfer to Cuttlefish were noted. Cllr Christie and the Clerk said they were in contact regarding moving the website forward.

Signed _____
Cllr J. Jardine, Chairman

d) Any other matters

Cllr Jardine said he would look at the format of the Action Tracker for the next meeting.

137-25/26 Heaths, Greens and Allotments

a) To receive a report on Heaths and Greens

Cllr Nokes said it had been too wet for the contractor to access the heath to do the planned work on the pond. He said if it was not possible before March, it would be left until July. He said the remainder of the tree work agreed across the heath was imminent.

b) To receive a report on the Allotments

Cllr Nokes said the Allotment Steward had resigned. He said the allotments needed someone to push forward.

c) To discuss the proposed memorial bench on the football pitch and note any action necessary.

It was noted that the current wooden sleeper bench could be removed, and the requested memorial bench could be placed at that location.

138-25/26 To agree the Parish Council response to planning applications received from Colchester City Council and to note decisions made on previous applications

260108 - Orchard Cottage, Seven Star Green, Eight Ash Green Colchester CO6 3QB - One and a half storey side extension and altered front entrance canopy- Resubmission of approved application 221508

This application was noted.

260173 -Ellore, Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green Colchester CO6 3QJ - Application for variation of condition 2 following grant of planning application 241506.

The application was noted.

Planning Decisions

252364 - Lampitts Farm, Turkey Cock Lane, Eight Ash Green Colchester CO3 8ND - Change of use of land (regularisation) to the rear of Unit 1 and erection of 2no. buildings, all for use within Class E (g) of The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 – **Permission granted, 17 conditions, 28 January 2026**

139-25/26 Precept

a) To consider and possibly agree to ratify the total precept demand on Colchester City Council for the financial year 2026/27 of £50,000

It was **agreed** to ratify the submitted request of £50,000 as the total precept demand for the financial year 2026/27. It was noted that this represented a Band D charge of £67.86, an increase of approximately 8.5% on the current year.

Signed _____
Cllr J. Jardine, Chairman

b) To note the reasons for the late submission of the precept demand to CCC

Cllr Jardine explained the reasons for the late submission and why the precept request of £50,000 was the same as the current year and yet resulted in a significant increase individually to residents.

It was noted that:

- The information necessary to provide the tax base calculation for Parish Councils was undertaken and completed by October each year by Colchester City Council;
- Colchester City Council then undertook to calculate the tax base again, in a prolonged operation by a different department;
- This resulted in the information not being distributed to parishes until the middle of December;
- This gave parishes very limited time to address any issues that might arise with the calculation;
- In the case of Eight Ash Green, the second calculation for 2025/26 undertaken by CCC had resulted in a significantly over-estimated tax base;
- The tax base for 2026/27 was then correspondingly reduced, meaning that even retaining the current total precept resulted in a significant increase for residents in their precept payment element of the Council Tax;
- This has caused the Parish Council significant difficulties in finalising the precept request submission, as the budget had been prepared with an understanding that the tax base would be broadly in line with the previous year, and would certainly not reduce, given the development within the parish.

The Chairman said he would write to CCC this year, to express these concerns.

140-25/26 Accounts & Payments:

a) Statement of Accounts to be circulated prior to the meeting

b) Approve payments for authorisation in accordance with 2025/26 Budget (Invoices Sheet) – to be circulated at the meeting

Payments were **approved** for authorisation as listed below:

A & J Lighting	Streetlight maintenance	£179.64
EAG Village Hall	Buy-A-Brick scheme	£100.00
GM Horst	Emails	£72.70
Various	Staff costs	£796.85
Aldham Village Hall	Hall hire	£16.00

141-25/26 Grants

a) To consider and possibly agree to give a grant of £100 to the local Brownie pack.

Signed _____
Cllr J. Jardine, Chairman

It was **agreed** to give a grant of £100 to the local Brownie Pack towards a planned excursion. It was noted that bank details still needed to be provided.

b) To consider and possibly agree to give a grant of £2,500 to the Village Hall Committee towards furniture for the new Village Hall.

Cllr Nokes had declared an interest and did not vote.

It was agreed to give a grant of £2,500 to the Village Hall Committee towards furniture for the new Village Hall.

142-25/26 To consider and possibly agree the inscription for the Village Hall Buy-a-Brick Scheme

It was noted that councillors would consider and confirm the inscription to Cllr Nokes and the Village Hall Committee.

143-25/26 To receive reports from Councillors

Cllr Christie referred to the proposed creation of a parish map. The following were noted:

- A local historian could be approached regarding research, with any proposed expenditure to be brought back to Council as appropriate;
- Residents could potentially be asked if they would allow pictures of their properties for illustration purposes;
- The final size would depend on the location of display within the hall;
- Any necessary decisions would be brought back to the Parish Council;
- The creation of the map would be a Parish Council initiative, in collaboration with the Village Hall Committee.

Cllr Jardine referred to local road closures and the lack of communication regarding bus services. It was noted that the Clerk would contact Hedingham to raise this issue as residents had been left stranded.

Cllr Nokes said the next Volunteer Day would be on 7 March 2026, meeting at the Cricketers at 9.30am.

He said the request from the Festival Committee for use of the heath for the 2026 Festival would be brought to Council in March.

144-25/26 Date of Next Planned Meeting

a) To consider and possibly agree to change the meeting date for the March meeting to Wednesday 18 March 2026

It was **agreed** to change the meeting date for the March meeting to Wednesday 18 March 2026.

b) To consider and possibly agree to change the meeting date for the Annual Meeting of the Council to Wednesday 6 May 2026

It was **agreed** to change the meeting date for the Annual Meeting of the Council to Wednesday 6 May 2026, venue to be confirmed.

Signed _____
Cllr J. Jardine, Chairman